

INCOMING TELEGRAM

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By JKL/MG, NARS, Date 1/31/78

CUBA - LA VIEWS ON NEXT STEP

LA DELS AWAITING WITH GREAT ANTICIPATION AND NATURALLY DISPLAY EQUAL CURIOSITY TOWARD OUTCOME U THANT CONVERSATIONS IN CUBA.

MEANING OF RUSSIAN WITHDRAWAL, US GUARANTEES AGAINST INVASION AND UN PARTICIPATION IN CUBAN CRISIS ARE RAISING INTERESTING DIVERGENCES OF SPECULATIVE VIEWS. ONE VIEW IS THAT SITUATION MAY NOW BE REGARDED AS SIMILAR TO THAT JUST PRIOR TO INFORMAL MFM WASH THAT WE MUST BEGIN ALL OVER AGAIN; THAT CASTRO HAS ACTUALLY GAINED BY OBTAINING GUARANTEES AGAINST INVASION AND CAN NOW DEVOTE TO ECONOMIC RECONSTRUCTION OF CUBAN RESOURCES PREVIOUSLY DEVOTED TO MILITARY DEFENSE. SECOND GROUP BELIEVES CASTRO HAS LOST GREATLY IN PRESTIGE OWING TO RUSSIAN APPARENT DISREGARD HIS OPINIONS. WHOLE INCIDENT REVEALING CASTRO PURELY AS PUPPET.

WIDE FEELING NEVERTHELESS THAT CUBAN PROBLEM REMAINS WITH US EVEN THOUGH INCIDENT OF MISSILE THREAT HAS BEEN REMOVED.

DIVERGENCE OF OPINION EXISTS AS TO WHETHER THIS THE TIME TO CRACK DOWN ON CASTRO AND ASSURE HIS OVERTHROW OR WHETHER PERSONAL POPULARITY OF CASTRO WILL SURVIVE EVEN THIS BLOW AND THAT PERHAPS WHILE HE IS "DOWN AND OUT" VIS-A-VIS RUSSIA SUPPORT ATTEMPTS SHOULD BE MADE TO REFORM HIM AND GET LOST SHEEP BACK INTO FOLD WITH CONSEQUENT REPARTICIPATION OF CUBA IN OAS.

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IDEAS CANNOT YET BE SAID TO HAVE JELLED BUT NEXT STEP IN CUBA AND MEANING OF UN ACTION FOR OAS SYSTEM SUBJECT OF WIDE AND SEARCHING INFORMAL INQUIRIES BY LA DELS.

IN ANY EVENT NOTICEABLE INTEREST LATINOS SEEK OUT AND HEAR US VIEWS THIS AND RELATED SUBJECT. URUGUAYAN REP STATED US PRESTIGE NEVER HIGHER. THESE ATTITUDES IF ANYTHING HOWEVER INCREASE STAKES AND IMPORTANCE MAKING RIGHT DECISION ON NEXT STEP COVERING WHOLE SCOPE OF OUR POST-MISSILE DISMANTLING CUBAN RELATIONSHIPS.

STEVENSON

COT

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